

SHOW US THE FATHER

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

PROVISION FOR THE POOR



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

At some point or other in our lives, most of us experience some degree of financial need. There have been a few times in my own life when I had serious financial worries. The first was when I lost a lot of money on a business venture in my early twenties. The second was when I was a student for the ministry, and I was working as a delivery driver to make ends meet. The third was when I went nine months without a call to serve a church. "How will I survive?" I kept worrying.

These were horrible months full of fear, anxiety, and stress. I felt physically sick at points and couldn't sleep some nights. I kept looking at my account balance hoping the bank would make a mistake and put some money in there. Or perhaps God would make a direct divine deposit to solve all my problems. But no, the minus sign was still there every time I looked, and the number was only getting bigger. "How will I survive?" I worried.

I'm sure many of you have been in similar circumstances. Perhaps some of you are in need right now. Rising inflation, medical costs, school fees, gas prices, etc., have got many of us worried about how we are going to make ends meet. Even if we survive this crisis, what about retirement, what about senior living costs? **How will I survive?** I want to give you a bank note today that will help to calm your fears and worries.

BACKGROUND

One of the roles associated with being a father is to provide for the needs of our household. That doesn't mean women shouldn't work (see Proverbs 31), but it does mean that the father in the family is ultimately responsible to provide for the needs of his family (1 Timothy 5:8). That's why God the Father is presented as the provider for his children. We see that for example in the Lord's prayer where we ask our heavenly father, "Give us today our daily bread" (Mat. 6:11). We also see it in Philippians 4:19-20 where the impoverished and imprisoned Paul pulls out a heavenly banknote issued by his heavenly father and gives it to every member of God's family. Let's examine that heavenly bill.



1. WE HAVE A RICH BANK

Behind every bill, every bank note, is an issuing bank. In the US, it is the Federal Reserve bank. In other countries, like the UK, different banks are authorized to issue currency notes in their own name. The name of the bank matters because it's what gives the currency authority and value. If the bank is stable and secure, people can put a lot of confidence in the currency. If it is unstable or unreliable, then our confidence levels in its authority and value will be low.

Paul's bank note has the most stable and reliable name in the world on it: "God." It doesn't get more secure than that. This bank has:

- A long **history** (eternal)
- Varied **experience** (billions of customers from different centuries and different countries)
- Perfect **efficiency** (nothing is wasted)
- Deep **reserves** ("riches in glory" and on earth, Ps. 50:9-10)
- Vast **wisdom** (James 1:5; Rom. 11:33)
- **Zero risk** (Matt. 6:19-20)
- A **prestigious HQ** ("in glory")
- **Personal** attention ("my God").

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Wonder and worship. Paul is frequently overwhelmed with God's riches (Eph. 1:7; 1:18; 2:7; 3:8; 3:16). Join him in wondering and worshipping.

Change your bank. For every look at your bank account, credit card statement, student debt, the inflation rate, gas prices, look at heaven's bank more.

CHANGE YOUR BANK TO CHANGE
YOUR MOOD AND YOUR MONEY.



What kind of currency does this bank issue?
The most valuable currency in the world.



2. WE HAVE A BIG BANK NOTE

The biggest dollar bill ever issued by the US was a \$10,000 bill. Today, the biggest note is \$100. Children, if I gave you a \$100 bill you'd look at it very closely wouldn't you? You'd look at the amount, you'd look at the color, you'd look to see if it was genuine. But I want you to do more than examine it. I want you to want it, take it, spend it, and enjoy spending it. It would take you a while to spend it all, wouldn't it?

Well I want to put before you today an even bigger note and a \$100 bill. Look at verse 19 and see if you can tell how much this bill is worth. What does it say? It says, not \$100 not even \$10,000 but "all your need." Wow! That's one valuable bank note isn't it? It is "need" singular indicating that God knows each and every single one of your needs. It doesn't say, "All you want" or "All you deserve" but "All your need." That means it's even more than financial need. It is that, but it's much more than that:

- All your **family** needs: marriage troubles, children worries, family conflict
- All your **emotional** needs: depression, anxiety, loneliness, fear, despair, worthlessness
- All your **physical** needs: food for the hungry, healing for the sick, patience for aging
- All your **spiritual** needs: strength for the tempted, forgiveness for the guilty, love for the loveless, a kingdom for the bankrupt.

Remember, the word here for "supply" is literally "fill to the brim" or "fill full." God doesn't just put a drip in our cups.

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Trust your Father's wisdom. If you've tried to cash this note and your need has not been met, God may be saying to you, "This is not a need but a want." Or perhaps he's saying, "I'll supply your need for submission and patience."

Ask for your Father's provision. Take this promise to him and tell him all your needs. Fathers love their children asking for help and love to meet needs (Matt. 7:9-11). Take this note, examine it, cash it in, and enjoy spending it.

GOD MEETS OUR NEEDS
SO WE CAN MEET OTHERS NEEDS



How do I access this provision?
There's an open cashier.



3. WE HAVE AN OPEN CASHIER

This bank is always open and there's one cashier who is always available. The cashier is the bank's representative, someone the bank has authorized to issue money and help customers. God's representative is Jesus Christ. He is the only way God deals with customers. We cannot bypass him or get to God any other way. There are other cashiers who promise that they can meet your needs.

- **Merit.** If I do enough good works, put enough money in the bank, God will give me what I need.
- **Luck.** Gambling, playing the lottery, risky investments, all promise to meet your needs. But they make false and fraudulent promises. They may meet some needs but they create even greater needs.
- **Religion.** If I follow certain rules and do certain rituals then God will be happy with me and help me out.
- **Hard work.** If I work hard enough and long enough, I'll get enough money.

These are all popular cashiers with long lines of agitated and anxious people waiting at their desks. The shortest line is the line for Christ Jesus. He gives far more easily and generously than the other cashiers. He gives "according to his riches in glory." That means "on the same scale as his riches in glory" or "in a manner that befits his heavenly wealth." No wonder those in this line have learned to be content (Phil 4:11).

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

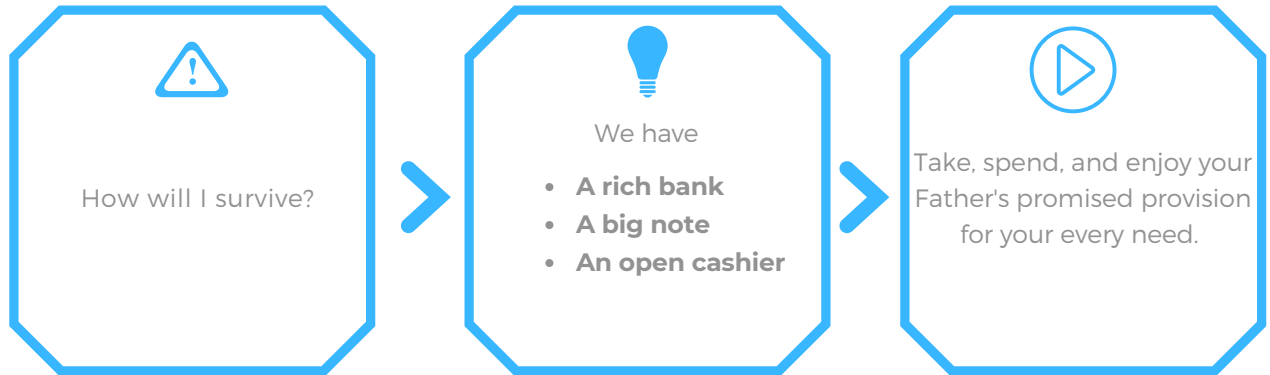
Switch lines. Give up waiting for satisfaction in the other lines and trust your Father to provide on a lavish scale. Take this note out of your pocket and cash it.

Praise God. Paul moves immediately from this great promise of his father (19) to great praise for the Father (20).

A GREAT PROMISE
MEANS GREAT PRAISE



SUMMARY



A NEW CHAPTER

Gospel. He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (Rom. 8:32). This is an argument from the greater to the lesser. If you ever doubt the giving heart of God get to the giving heart of God at the cross.

Trust. Trust the bank, trust the bank note, trust the bank cashier. Use this note every day to remove fear and worry.

Give. Freely you have received, freely give (Matt. 10:8). Reflect the Father in your daily life.

Prayer. My generous Father, thank you for providing for my every need in the past. Help me to trust your promise for the future too.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When have you felt great need in your life? How did it affect you?
2. How has God provided for your needs in the past?
3. What are your greatest needs today?
4. What's cashier's have you tried and whatever was the result?
5. How can you live out this truth before your children, neighbors, colleagues?
6. How should this change earthly fathers?

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